

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5772

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN'S CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE CHANGES IN INDIAN
KASHMIR

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 6611

(B) A-97, DATED JUNE 20, 1974

SUMMARY: GOP OFFICIALS HAVE VOICED DEEP CONCERN OVER LIKELIHOOD OF IMMINENT CHANGES IN STATUS OF INDIAN KASHMIR. PAK MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS AZIZ AHMED HAS RE-AFFIRMED GOP SUPPORT TO KASHMIR'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS WARNS THAT ANY SUCH MOVE COULD BE CATASTROPHIC FOR REGION. IF ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT, REPORTED CHANGE COULD ENDANGER SIMLA PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY GOP OFFICIALS HAVE VOICED DEEP CONCERN OVER POSSIBILITY OF IMMINENT CHANGES IN STATUS OF INDIAN STATE OF KASHMIR. THEY FEAR GOI MAY BE ON VERGE OF GRANTING INTERNAL AUTONOMY TO INDIAN-HELD KASHMIR, RESERVING ONLY DEFENCE, COMMUNICATIONS AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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TO CENTER'S CONTROL. THEIR CONCERN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN

GENERATED BY RECENTLY REPORTED STATEMENTS BY SHEIKH ABDULLAH AND MR AFZAL BEG, BY REPORTS OF MEETINGS BETWEEN ABDULLAH AND GOI OFFICIALS, AND BY RUMORS OF INDIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS IN KASHMIR AREA. STORIES ARE CURRENT HERE THAT SHEIKH ABDULLAH HAS BEEN CO-OPTED BY GOI INTO ABANDONING CALL FOR KASHMIR PLEBISCITE AND ACCEPTING STATUS OF AUTONOMY UNDER INDIAN AEGIS. BEG IS ALSO REPORTED AS HAVING ASSERTED INDIAN KASHMIR CLAIM TO PAKISTAN-HELD (AZAD) KASHMIR.

2. REFLECTING THESE CONCERNS MINSTATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AZIZ AHMED, ISSUED PUBLIC STATEMENT JULY 10 REAFFIRMING PAKISTAN'S "FULL SUPPORT" TO KASHMIRI PEOPLE IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. STATEMENT ASSERTED THAT "IT IS NOT OPEN TO ANY POLITICAL LEADER OR POLITICAL PARTY IN THE STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR TO BARTER AWAY THAT RIGHT." ANY AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND SHEIKH ABDULLAH "CAN IN NO WAY ALTER, MUCH LESS DESTROY, THE RIGHT OF KASHMIR TO TAKE A DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF ACCESSION THROUGH A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL PLEBISCITE," A "SACROSANCT" RIGHT "GUARANTEED" BY INDIA, PAKISTAN AND U.M. AZIZ AHMED LABELED AS "PALPABLY FALLACIOUS" AFZAL BEG'S REPORTED ARGUMENT THAT INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAD FAILED TO FULFILL THEIR PLEDGES TO HOLD PLEBISCITE, THUS JUSTIFYING KASHMIRIS MAKING BEST OF SITUATION THROUGH DEAL WITH GOI. AHMED CHARGED THAT SHEIKH ABDULLAH'S REAL REASON FOR SEEKING DEAL WITH INDIA WAS THAT OF ENABLING HIM "AGAIN TO RETURN TO POWER."

3. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES JULY 12 LEAD EDITORIAL WARNED THAT "DARK PURPOSES" RELATING TO POSSIBLE INDIAN "ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE INTEGRATION OF OCCUPIED KASHMIR" LAY BEHIND WHAT PAKS ARE TRUMPETING AS SYNCHRONIZED HOSTILE MOVES BY INDIAN AND AFGHANISTAN NEAR PAK FRONTIERS, TAKING LINE FROM PRIMIN BHUTTO'S RECENT COMMENT TO NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT CLARITY, PAPER ASSERTED THAT "LOGICAL DEDUCTION FROM RECENT EVENTS" INDICATED THAT INDIANS "MIGHT BE WANTING TO PROVOKE PAKISTAN AND CREATE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR OWN ENCROACHMENT ON AZIZ KASHMIR." PAPER CLAIMED INDIANS HAD PROMISED TO HAND OVER POWER TO SHEIKH ABDULLAH IF HIS PLEBISCITE FRONT CHANGED ITS NAME AND AGREED TO COALITION WITH CONGRESS. DESPAIRING OF FURTHER STRUGGLE, SHEIKH ABDULLAH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND BEG REPORTEDLY AGREED TO INDIAN OFFER. "INSTANT POPULAR REACTION AGAINST THIS DECISION" SHOULD HAVE DETERRED FURTHER ACTION BUT GOI WAS INTIMIDATING KASHMIRIS "FIRST BY THE NUCLEAR BLAST, AND NOW BY MOVEMENT OF TROOPS." "PAKISTAN HAS REASON TO FEEL DEEPLY CONCERNED BOTH OVER INDIA'S THREATENING POSTURE ON THE BORDERS AND IMPENDING STEPS WITHIN HELD KASHMIR," PAPER WARNED, AS "THESE COULD BE CATASTROPHIC FOR THIS REGION."

4. COMMENT. (A) GOP OBVIOUSLY HIGHLY EXERCISED ABOUT POSSIBLE GOI/ABDULLAH ACCOMMODATION ON INDIA-HELD KASHMIR. IN CONVERSATION YESTERDAY WITH DCM, BHATTY, DIRGEN FOR UN AFFAIRS, SAID IT IS REPORTED FROM INDIAN SIDE THAT MEETINGS HELD IN SRINAGAR EARLY THIS MONTH BY ABDULLAH'S PLEBISCITE FRONT ATTENDED BY FIVE-MAN DELEGATION FROM AZAD KASHMIR. AS ALSO ALLEGED IN THE PRESS, BHATTY SAID HIS GOVERNMENT BELIEVES ABDULLAH, LONG WEARY OF HIS STANDOFF WITH INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND DESIROUS OF ACHIEVING POSITION AND POWER, SOFTENING HIS STAND AND ACCOMMODATING TO GOI PRESSURES.

(B) GOP OBVIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT EFFECT ANY GENUINE SETTLEMENT WITH GOI BY "LION" AND PEOPLE OF KASHMIR WOULD HAVE ON AZAD KASHMIR, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT IS REPORTED THAT MIRZA AFZAL BEG CLAIMING AZAD KASHMIR SHOULD JOIN UP WITH INDIAN KASHMIR. THESE PUBLIC SLURS IN PAKISTAN AGAINST ABDULLAH'S INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE ARE BELIEVED UNPRECEDENTED. THEY REFLECT EMOTIONAL ANTIPATHY TO ANY ACCOMMODATION WITH GOI ON KASHMIR ISSUE SHORT OF PLEBISCITE BUT THEY MAY ALSO SERVE TO ANTAGONIZE ABDULLAH AND FURTHER THE PROCESS THE GOP OPPOSES. BYROADE

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